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Islamic values, cultural customs and influences upon delivery of acute and critical care nursing services to patients admitted to Saudi Arabian hospitals

Bandar Gashash

Ministry of Health, KSA

Introduction: Saudi Arabia is an Islamic country located in the Arab peninsula where the Islamic religion was established and founded. The country has a shortage of Saudi national nurses. The Saudi government recruits many expatriate nurses to cover this shortage. Expatriate nurses may have different religious beliefs and cultural values but are required to work in Saudi Arabia and provide good quality competent care to Saudi Arabian patients. The Ministry of Health (MOH) in Saudi Arabia data base shows 51.28% of nursing professionals working in MOH health care organisation are expatriates (Health Statistical Year Book, 2010). These statistics explain the multi cultural make up of the health care organisations in Saudi Arabia. In some hospitals in Saudi Arabia there are nurses from 30 to 50 different countries (Tumult, 2001). This large expatriate nursing workforce is required to understand the Islamic values and cultural traditions to be able to respect the patient's beliefs and also deliver care that is culturally sensitive (Penuchi, 2005; Bankert et al., 2005)

Aims: This study has two aims: Firstly, it aims to examine the Islamic values and cultural customs that influence the delivery of nursing critical care services to patients admitted to Saudi Arabian intensive care units. Secondly, the study will evaluate Saudi and non-Saudi nurse's adaptation of care to Islamic religious beliefs and Saudi customary values in their daily critical care nursing service delivery process.

This study aims to answer the following questions.

- 1) How do critical care nurses consider cultural and religious patient's values when delivering care?
- 2) How is critical care practice adapted within an Islamic country to provide quality care?
- 3) How do non-Saudi nurses view and adapt care to fit with cultural and religious values?
- 4) What are the barriers and facilitating factors for nurses to work in partnership with Islamic patients and families?

Methodology: This is a two-phase research design study. Phase one utilises a survey design conducted to provide data that will give a snap shot of the effects of Islamic values, cultural customs and influences upon the delivery of acute and critical care nursing to patients admitted to Southern regional Saudi Arabian hospitals. The development of the instrument and its claim for validity will be discussed. This will be followed by phase two which is face to face interviews. This study uses research instrument developed particularly for this study utilising constructs arising from Lininger's Sunrise Model and will be one of the few mixed method studies with this focus conducted with this population.

Outcomes: Any study or research conducted in Saudi Arabia may influence many Islamic countries around the globe as well as Islamic populations in non-Islamic countries. The results of this research provide valuable information about nurses' practice and cultural perceptions when working in Saudi Arabian hospitals. The result of this research study may be used to improve the quality of nursing critical care services to Saudi Arabian and other Islamic people living throughout the world. The results consider the adaptation of Islamic values to acute care delivery and have generated themes that may facilitate understanding of nursing care in Islamic dominant countries.

algashash1@hotmail.com